

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

NEPA TERMINOLOGY

The controlling definitions for terms under CEQ's NEPA regulations are contained at 40 CFR. The numbers in parentheses refer to the appropriate section of 40 CFR. These definitions are provided as a supplement to those regulatory definitions.

Categorical exclusion (CE) (1508.4)—An action with no measurable environmental impact which is described in one of the categorical exclusion lists in section 3-3 or 3-4 and for which no exceptional circumstances (section 3-5) exist. NPS also uses the acronym "CX" to denote a categorical exclusion.

Connected actions (1508.25)—Actions that are closely related. They automatically trigger other actions that have environmental impacts, they cannot or will not proceed unless other actions have been taken previously or simultaneously, or they are interdependent parts of a larger action and/or depend on the larger action for their justification.

Conservation planning and impact assessment—Within NPS, this process is synonymous with the NEPA process. This process evaluates alternative courses of action and impacts so that decisions are made in accord with the conservation and preservation mandate of the NPS Organic Act.

Cooperating agency (1508.5)—A federal agency other than the one preparing the NEPA document (lead agency) that has jurisdiction over the proposal by virtue of law or special expertise and that has been deemed a cooperating agency by the lead agency. State or local governments, and/or Indian tribes, may be designated cooperating agencies as appropriate (see 1508.5 and 1502.6).

Cultural resources (NPS-28, Appendix A)—Aspects of a cultural system that are valued by or significantly representative of a culture or that contain significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for the National Register of Historic Places, and as archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources for NPS management purposes.

Cumulative actions (1508.25)—Actions that, when viewed with other actions in the past, the present, or the reasonably foreseeable future, regardless of who has undertaken or will undertake them, have an additive impact on the resource the proposal would affect.

Cumulative impact (1508.7)—The impacts of cumulative actions.

Direct effect (1508.8)—An impact that occurs as a result of the proposal or alternative in the same place and at the same time as the action.

Environmental assessment (EA) (1508.9)—A brief NEPA document that is prepared to (a) help determine whether the impact of a proposal or alternatives could be significant; (b) aid NPS in

compliance with NEPA by evaluating a proposal that will have no significant impacts, but that may have measurable adverse impacts; or (c) evaluate a proposal that either is not described on the list of categorically excluded actions, or is on the list but exceptional circumstances (section 3-5) apply.

Environmental impact statement (EIS) (1508.11)—A detailed NEPA document that is prepared when a proposal or alternatives have the potential for significant impact on the human environment.

Environmental screening process—The analysis that precedes a determination of the appropriate level of NEPA documentation. The minimum requirements of the environmental screening process are a site visit, consultation with any agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and the completion of a screening checklist. The process must be complete for all NPS actions that have the potential for environmental impact and are not described in section 3-3.

Environmentally preferred alternative (1505.2, Q6a)—Of the alternatives analyzed, the one that would best promote the policies in NEPA section 101. This is usually selected by the IDT members. It is presented in the NPS NEPA document (draft and final EIS or EA) for public review and comment.

Exceptional circumstances—Circumstances that, if they apply to a project described in the NPS categorical exclusion lists (sections 3-3 and 3-4), mean a CE is inappropriate and an EA or an EIS must be prepared because the action may have measurable or significant impacts. Exceptional circumstances are described in section 3-5.

Finding of no significant impact (FONSI) (1508.13)—A determination based on an EA and other factors in the public planning record for a proposal that, if implemented, would have no significant impact on the human environment.

Human environment (1508.14)—Defined by CEQ as the natural and physical environment, and the relationship of people with that environment (1508.14). Although the socioeconomic environment receives less emphasis than the physical or natural environment in the CEQ regulations, NPS considers it to be an integral part of the human environment.

Impact topics—Specific natural, cultural, or socioeconomic resources that would be affected by the proposed action or alternatives (including no action). The magnitude, duration, and timing of the effect to each of these resources is evaluated in the impact section of an EA or an EIS.

Indirect impact (1508.8)—Reasonably foreseeable impacts that occur removed in time or space from the proposed action. These are “downstream” impacts, future impacts, or the impacts of reasonably expected connected actions (e.g., growth of an area after a highway to it is complete).

Issues—In NEPA, issues are environmental, social, and economic problems or effects that may occur if the proposed action or alternatives (including no action) are implemented or continue to be implemented.

Lead agency (1508.16)—The agency either preparing or taking primary responsibility for preparing the NEPA document.

Major federal action (1508.18)—Actions that have a large federal presence and that have the potential for significant impacts to the human environment. They include adopting policy, implementing rules or regulations; adopting plans, programs, or projects; ongoing activities; issuing permits; or financing projects completed by another entity.

Memo to file—A memo to the planning record or statutory compliance file that NPS offices may complete when (a) NEPA has already been completed in site-specific detail for a proposal, usually as part of a document of larger scope, or (b) a time interval has passed since the NEPA document was approved, but information in that document is still accurate.

Mitigated EA (Q40)—An EA that has been rewritten to incorporate mitigation into a proposal or to change a proposal to reduce impacts to below significance.

Mitigation (1508.20)—A modification of the proposal or alternative that lessens the intensity of its impact on a particular resource.

NEPA process—The objective analysis of a proposal to determine the degree of its environmental and interrelated social and economic impacts on the human environment, alternatives and mitigation that reduce that impact, and the full and candid presentation of the analysis to, and involvement of, the interested and affected public.

Notices of availability—Separate notices submitted to the *Federal Register* that the draft EIS and the final EIS are ready for distribution.

Notice of intent (1508.22)—The notice submitted to the *Federal Register* that an EIS will be prepared. It describes the proposed action and alternatives, identifies a contact person in NPS, and gives time, place, and descriptive details of the agency's proposed scoping process.

Preferred alternative (1502.14 (e))—The alternative an NPS decision-maker has identified as preferred at the draft EIS stage or EA. Identification of the preferred alternative helps the public focus its comments during review of the NEPA document.

Programmatic documents—Broader scope EAs or EISs that describe the impacts of proposed policy changes, programs, or plans.

Proposal (1508.23)—The stage at which NPS has a goal and is actively preparing to make a decision on one or more alternative means of accomplishing that goal. The goal can be a project, plan, policy, program, and so forth. NEPA begins when the effects can be meaningfully evaluated.

Record of decision (ROD) (1505.2)—The document that is prepared to substantiate a decision based on an EIS. It includes a statement of the decision made, a detailed discussion of decision rationale, and the reasons for not adopting all mitigation measures analyzed, if applicable.

Scoping (1508.25)—Internal NPS decision-making on issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, the analysis boundary, appropriate level of documentation, lead and cooperating agency roles, available references and guidance, defining purpose and need, and so forth. External scoping is the early involvement of the interested and affected public.

Tiering (1508.28)—The use of broader, programmatic NEPA documents to discuss and analyze cumulative regional impacts and define policy direction, and the incorporation by reference of this material in subsequent narrower NEPA documents to avoid duplication and focus on issues “ripe for decision” in each case.

ACRONYMS

CE	Categorical exclusion
CEF	Categorical exclusion form
CEQ	President’s Council on Environmental Quality
CX	Categorical exclusion
DEC	Division Environmental Comment request issued by NPS Environmental Quality Division-WASO
DM	Departmental manual
DOI	Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental assessment
ECM	Environmental compliance memorandum
EIS	Environmental impact statement
EO	Executive order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Environmental Review issued by the Department of the Interior
ERM	Environmental review memorandum
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESM	Environmental statement memorandum
ESF	Environmental screening form
EQD	Environmental Quality Division
FONSI	Finding of no significant impact
GGNRA	Golden Gate National Recreation Area
GMP	General management plan
IDT	Interdisciplinary team
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service (New name is NOAA Fisheries)
NOA	Notice of availability
NOI	Notice of intent
NPS	National Park Service
PORE	Point Reyes National Seashore
REO	Regional environmental officer
ROD	Record of decision
SSO	System support office

FIRE TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

AFFIRMS. (Administrative and Forest Fire Information Retrieval and Management System): A user-oriented interactive computer program which permits entry of fire weather observations and fire weather forecasts and which computes danger indices.

Backing fire. A prescribed fire or wildfire burning into or against the wind or down the slope without the aid of wind.

BEHAVE. A refinement of the Fire Behavior Prediction System that allows development of customized fuel models that can access the Rothermel fire spread equation (Burgan and Rothermel 1984).

Blackline. Preburning of fuels, either adjacent to a control line before igniting a prescribed fire or along a roadway or boundary as a deterrent to human-caused fires. Blacklining is usually done in heavy fuels adjacent to a control line during periods of low fire danger to reduce pressure on holding forces; blackline denotes a condition in which there is no unburned fine fuel remaining.

Burning index (BI). A relative number related to the contribution that fire behavior makes to the amount of effort needed to contain a fire in a specified fuel type. Doubling the BI indicates twice the effort will be required to contain a fire in that fuel type as was previously required providing all other parameters are held constant.

Cold trail. Method of controlling a partly-dead fire edge by careful inspection and feeling with the hand to detect any fire and extinguishing it by digging out every live spot and trenching any live edge.

Complex fire management program. A program involving prescribed burning, in addition to wildland fire suppression.

Density. The number of individuals, usually by species, per unit area.

Fire behavior. The response of fire to its environment of fuel, weather, and terrain including its ignition, spread, and development.

Fire effects. Physical, biological, and ecological impacts of fire on the environment.

Fire effects monitoring. A process that allows managers to evaluate whether environmental goals and objectives are being achieved and to adjust prescriptions to achieve a desired range of effects on the biotic and physical environment. Fire effects monitoring does not necessarily prove cause-and-effect associations. However, such monitoring will indicate if specific prescribed burn objectives were met and help management assess long-term change in these fire management areas.

Fire hazard. A fuel complex, defined by volume, type condition, arrangement, and location, that determines the degree of ease of ignition and of resistance to control.

Fire intensity. A general term relating to the heat energy released in a fire.

Fire resistance. A botanical adaptation that results in a lower probability of being injured or killed by fire. (e.g., thick platy or corky bark, or buds protected by long needles).

Fire return interval. Length of time necessary for an area equal to the entire area of interest to burn; size of the area of interest must be clearly specified.

Fire monitoring. The systematic process of collecting and recording fire-related data, particularly with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects, smoke, and fire location.

Fire weather. Weather conditions which influence fire ignition, behavior, and suppression.

Fireline. Generally, any cleared or treated strip used to control a fire's spread; more specifically, that portion of a control line from which flammable materials have been removed by scraping or digging to mineral soil.

Flame height. The average maximum vertical extension of flames at the leading edge of the fire front. Occasional flashes that rise above the general level of flames are not considered. This distance is less than the flame length if flames are tilted due to wind or slope.

Flame length. The distance between the flame tip and the midpoint of the flame depth at the base of the flame (generally the ground surface); an indicator of fire intensity.

Flammability. The relative ease with which a substance ignites and sustains combustion.

Fuel. The materials which are burned in a fire: duff litter, grass dead branch wood, snags, logs, stumps, weeds, brush, foliage, and to a limited degree, green trees.

Fuel break. Generally wide (10-1000 feet) strips of land on which native vegetation has been permanently modified so that fires burning into them can be more readily controlled. Some fuelbreaks contain firelines (e.g., roads, handlines) which can be quickly widened with hand tools or by burning out.

Fuel loading. Amount of dead fuel present on a particular site a given time; the percentage of fuel available for combustion changes with the season.

Fuel model. Simulated fuel complex for which all fuel descriptors required for the solution of a mathematical rate of spread model have been specified.

Hazardous fuels. Fuels that, if ignited, could threaten park developments, human life and safety, natural resources, or carry fire across park boundaries.

Head fire. A fire front spreading or ignited to spread with the gradient (downwind or upslope).

Human-caused fire. Any fire caused directly or indirectly by person(s).

Mean Fire Interval. Arithmetic average of all fire intervals determined, in years in a designated area during a specified time period; size of the area and the time period must be specified.

NFDRS. (National Fire Danger Rating System) Multiple index scheme designed to provide fire suppression and land management personnel with a systematic means of assessing various aspects of fire danger on a day-to-day basis.

NIFQS. (National Interagency Fire Qualification System) Fire management qualifications systems which describes for a particular large fire suppression organization the acceptable standards for experience, training, and physical fitness required for principal jobs within the system. NIFQS, when coupled with a large fire suppression organization, provides a complete system for fire management.

NIIMS. (National Interagency Incident Management System) Common command system designed to be used by any agency as a day-to-day operational procedure which can be expanded in scope to provide management for major single or multi-jurisdictional emergencies.

Natural fire. Any fire of natural origin (e.g., lightning, spontaneous combustion, volcanic activity).

Prescribed burning. The deliberate ignition of a fire in accordance with an established management plan to accomplish specific objectives under given prescriptions for weather and fuel conditions.

Prescribed fire. The skillful application of fire to natural fuels under conditions of weather, fuel moisture, soil moisture, etc., that will allow confinement of the fire to a predetermined area and at the same time will produce the intensity of heat and rate of spread required to meet certain overall objectives in the areas of silviculture, wildlife management, grazing, hazard fuel reduction, etc. The overall objective of prescribed fire is to employ fire scientifically to realize maximum net benefits with minimum damage and acceptable cost.

Presuppression. Activities undertaken in advance of fire occurrence to help ensure more effective fire suppression; includes over-all planning, recruitment and training of fire personnel, procurement and maintenance of firefighting equipment and supplies, fuel treatment, and creating, maintaining, and improving a system of fuelbreaks, roads, water sources, and control lines.

Prevention. All activities concerned with minimizing the incidence of wildfires.

Rate of spread. Relative activity of a fire in extending its horizontal dimensions, expressed as rate of increase of the perimeter, rate of increase in area, or rate of advance of its head, depending on the intended use of the information; generally in chains or acres per hour for a specific period in the fire's history.

Rehabilitation. The activities necessary to repair damage or disturbance caused by wildfire or the fire suppression activity.

Smoke Management. Application of knowledge of fire behavior and meteorological processes to minimize degradation of air quality during prescribed fires.

Smokechaser. Person whose principal function is fire suppression.

Suppression. All actions intended to extinguish or limit the growth of fires, regardless of the strategies and tactics chosen.

Timelag. Time necessary, under specified conditions, for a fuel particle to lose approximately 63% of the difference between its initial moisture content and its equilibrium moisture content. Providing conditions remain unchanged, a fuel will reach 95% of its equilibrium moisture content after 4 timelag periods.

Urban/Wildland Interface. Line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetation fuels.

WIMS. (Weather Information Management System). This new computerized system will replace the current AFFIRMS program in 1992.

Wet line. A line of water, or water and chemical retardant, sprayed along the ground, and which serves as a temporary control line from which to ignite or stop a low-intensity fire.

Wildfire. Any fire occurring on wildland that is not meeting management objectives and thus requires a suppression response.

